

owners about the loss of family farms and to raise funds to keep farm families on their land. Dave Matthews joined the Farm Aid Board of Directors in 2001. The Farm Aid concert is the longest running benefit series concert in America. The organization raised more than \$39 million to endorse a resilient family farm system of agriculture by "promoting food from family farms, growing the Good Food Movement, helping farmers thrive, and taking action to change the system."

Farm Aid 2011 was held at the Livestrong Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kansas, on August 13th. The event showcased homegrown concessions featuring local, organic, or family farm sourced ingredients. The board members, along with other acclaimed artists, helped in promoting the organization and its mission of protecting family owned farms. The board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and John Mellencamp, David Matthews along with other artists such as Jason Mraz, Jamey Johnson, Jakob Dylan, Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real, Will Dailey & the Rivals, Billy Joe Shaver, Robert Francis, Ray Price, Rebecca Pidgeon, Heart of Darkness, John Trudell, and the Blackwood Quartet gave their time and talent to help family farmers who are under extreme economic pressure.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing Farm Aid 2011 for helping family farmers thrive all over the country while inspiring millions of people to learn about the importance of maintaining family owned farms.

IN OPPOSITION OF BALANCED
BUDGET AMENDMENTS TO THE
CONSTITUTION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 19, 2011

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution represents bad economics—pure and simple. To require a balanced budget every year without regard to the state of the economy would threaten to make recessions more frequent, more protracted, and deeper. It would require greater cuts to spending at the time when the Federal Government would be needed most to use countercyclical policies to aid its citizens and states in weathering economic crises. It would jeopardize our nation's credit by making default a more regular likelihood.

A balanced budget amendment is a good sound bite, but it is not good policy. The ability to borrow in a time of crisis to help our states and citizens is a critical tool to aid our nation during economic crisis. A balanced budget requirement risks substantial harm to our economy, to Social Security, to military and civil service retirement systems, to critical government activities, and to our most vulnerable citizens. During economic hardship, federal revenues decline and safety net programs become even more vital lifelines, causing deficits to rise. Rather than allowing the Federal Govern-

ment the flexibility to institute a variety of economic stabilizers, a balanced budget amendment would force the Federal Government to cut benefits or raise taxes exactly when such responses are least effective and more likely to further weaken the economy and result in higher deficits. As Robert Reischauer explained in 1992, a balanced budget amendment "would undermine the stabilizing role of the Federal Government."

I cannot fathom how policymakers would risk default and serious economic damage to our nation in order to make the elderly pay more for medicine, poor children go hungry, and low income students skip college in order to give that money to corporate jet owners, hedge fund agents, wealthy citizens who own multiple homes, and oil companies that already earn tens of billions of dollars in profits.

During times of challenge, I resolutely believe that the mantle of responsibility for caring for the poor and struggling falls squarely on the shoulders of government, not primarily on the charity of individual citizens. In such times of hardship and strife, government leaders should extend help to the needy, not advance the wealth of the most secure. With so many of our children and youth bearing the brunt of our nation's economic hardship, I am committed to protecting all of America, not just the privileged. For these reasons, I resolutely and steadfastly oppose a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.